

CLAIMS

We claim.

1 1. A method for integrated event tracking of an electronic escrow
2 transaction, comprising:

3 receiving an instruction from a purchaser, via a network, to
4 effect an electronic escrow transaction associated with a sale,
5 made via the network, of goods or services from a seller;

6 directing at least one network communication with each of the
7 purchaser, the seller and at least one financial institution in
8 effecting the electronic escrow transaction; and

9 storing a log of each communication, including the
10 instruction, associated with the electronic escrow transaction

1 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 initiating a debit from an account associated with the
3 purchaser;

4 storing an indication of the initiation of the debit from the
5 purchaser account;

6 initiating a credit to an account associated with the seller;
7 and

8 storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to the
9 seller account.

1 3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 initiating a debit from an account associated with a
3 processing agent; and

4 storing an indication of the initiation of the debit from the
5 processing agent account.

1 4. The method of claim 3, further comprising:

2 initiating a credit to an account associated with the seller;
3 and

4 storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to the
5 seller account;

6 wherein the credit to the seller account is a corresponding
7 credit to the debit from the processing agent account.

1 5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 transmitting a notice, via the network, to the seller that
3 funds from an account associated with the purchaser are available
4 and that the seller should ship the goods to, or provide the
5 service for, the purchaser; and

6 storing an indication that the notice has been transmitted to
7 the seller.

1 6. The method of claim 5, wherein:

2 the notice is transmitted after at least one of (i) a
3 predetermined period, beginning at initiation of a debit to an
4 account associated with a purchaser, has elapsed, or (ii) funds
5 from the purchaser account are credited to an account associated
6 with a service provider.

1 7. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 receiving, via the network, a first notice of one of (i) the
3 goods having been shipped, or (ii) the services having been
4 performed;

5 storing an indication that the first notice has been received;
6 transmitting a second notice, via the network, to the
7 purchaser that the seller has one of (i) shipped the goods to the
8 purchaser, or (ii) performed the services for the purchaser; and
9 storing an indication that the second notice has been
10 transmitted to the purchaser;

11 wherein the first notice is received from at least one of (i)
12 a shipping agent, or (ii) the seller.

1 8. The method of claim 7, wherein the first notice includes a
2 delivery tracking number.

1 9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 receiving, via the network, a notice of one of (i) the goods

3 having been received from the seller and being acceptable, or (ii)
4 the services having been acceptably performed by the seller; and
5 storing an indication that the notice has been received;
6 wherein the notice is received from at least one of (i) the
7 seller, (ii) a shipping agent, or (iii) the purchaser.

1 10. The method of claim 9, further comprising:
2 initiating a credit to an account associated with the seller;
3 and
4 storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to the
5 seller account;
6 wherein the credit to the seller account is initiated
7 subsequent to receiving the notice.

1 11. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 receiving, via the network, a notice of one of (i) the goods
3 having been shipped by the seller, or (ii) the services having been
4 performed by the seller;
5 initiating a credit to an account associated with the seller;
6 storing an indication that the notice has been received; and
7 storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to the
8 seller account;
9 wherein the credit to the seller account is initiated after a
10 predetermined period, beginning at receipt of the notice; and
11 wherein the notice is received from at least one of (i) the
12 seller, or (ii) a shipping agent.

1 12. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 receiving, via the network, a notice of one of (i) the goods
3 having been received from the seller and being unacceptable, (ii)
4 the goods having not been received from the seller, (iii) the
5 services having not been acceptably performed by the seller, or
6 (iv) the services having not been performed by the seller; and
7 storing an indication that the notice has been received.

1 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the notice includes a notice

2 to suspend a pending credit to an account associated with the
3 seller

1 14. The method of claim 12, wherein the notice includes a notice
2 to reverse a debit to an account associated with the purchaser.

1 15. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 receiving, via the network, a first notice that the goods have
3 been returned shipped to the seller;
4 storing an indication that the first notice has been received;
5 transmitting to the seller, via the network, a second notice
6 that the goods have been returned shipped from the purchaser; and
7 storing an indication that the second notice has been
8 transmitted to the seller;
9 wherein the first notice is received from at least one of (i)
10 the purchaser, or (ii) a shipping agent.

1 16. The method of claim 15, wherein the first notice includes a
2 delivery tracking number.

1 17. The method of claim 15, further comprising:
2 receiving, via the network, a third notice that the goods have
3 been received by the seller; and
4 storing an indication that the third notice has been received;
5 wherein the third notice is received from at least one of (i)
6 the seller, or (ii) the shipping agent.

1 18. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 initiating a credit to an account associated with the
3 purchaser; and
4 storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to the
5 purchaser account;
6 wherein the credit to the purchaser account is initiated at
7 after least one of (i) upon receipt of a notice, via the network
8 from at least one of the seller or a shipping agent, that the goods
9 have been delivered to the seller, or (ii) after a predetermined

10 period, beginning at a notification to the seller that the
11 purchaser has shipped the goods to the seller, has elapsed.

1 19. The method of claim 1, wherein the goods or services are goods
2 or services purchased from an Internet auction.

1 20. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 initiating a debit from an account associated with the
3 purchaser;

4 initiating a credit to an escrow account associated with a
5 processing agent;

6 initiating a debit to the escrow account associated with the
7 processing agent;

8 initiating a credit to an account associated with the seller;

9 storing an indication of the initiation of the debit to the
10 purchaser account; and

11 storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to the
12 seller account.

1 21. The method of claim 20, wherein the credit to the escrow
2 account is a corresponding credit to the debit from the purchaser
3 account.

1 22. The method of claim 20, wherein the credit to the seller
2 account is a corresponding credit to the debit from the escrow
3 account.

1 23. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 receiving the instruction via a web page generated subsequent
3 to the purchaser selecting a hyper-link presented to the purchaser
4 by an Internet web site selling goods or services;

5 wherein the web page presented to the purchaser includes
6 details of the sale.

1 24. The method of claim 1, wherein the stored logged
2 communications include an indication of the date and time each

3 communication is received or transmitted.

1 25. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 retrieving any of the logged and stored communications.

1 26. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 receiving, from a shipping agent, a first notice that goods
3 have been delivered to the purchaser;
4 storing an indication that the first notice has been received;
5 receiving, from the purchaser, a second notice that the
6 delivered goods are acceptable;
7 storing an indication that the second notice has been
8 received; and
9 initiating a credit to an account associated with the seller.

1 27. The method of claim 26, wherein:
2 the credit to the account associated with the seller is
3 initiated after at least one of (i) a predetermined period,
4 beginning upon receipt of the first notice, has elapsed, or (ii)
5 receipt of the second notice.

1 28. A system for integrated event tracking of an electronic escrow
2 transaction, comprising:
3 a communications port configured to receive and to transmit
4 information via a network;
5 a processor in communication with the communications port and
6 configured to direct at least one network communication with each
7 of a purchaser, a seller and at least one financial institution in
8 effecting an electronic escrow transaction arising out of a sale of
9 goods or services made via a network, and to log and store each
10 communication associated with the electronic escrow transaction;
11 and
12 a memory in communication with the processor and configured to
13 store the logged communications.

1 29. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further

2 configured to:

3 receive an instruction from the purchaser, via network
4 communication, to effect the electronic escrow transaction; and
5 store an indication of the received instruction in the memory.

1 30. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2 configured to:

3 initiate a debit from an account associated with the
4 purchaser;

5 store an indication in the memory of the initiation of the
6 debit from the purchaser account;

7 initiate a credit to an account associated with the seller;
8 and

9 store an indication in the memory of the initiation of the
10 credit to the seller account.

1 31. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2 configured to:

3 initiate a debit from an account associated with a processing
4 agent; and

5 store an indication in the memory of the initiation of the
6 debit from the processing agent account.

1 32. The system of claim 31, wherein:

2 the processor is further configured to initiate a credit to an
3 account associated with the seller and store an indication in the

4 memory of the initiation of the credit to the seller account; and
5 the credit to the seller account is a corresponding credit to

6 the debit from the processing agent account.

1 33. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2 configured to:

3 transmit a notice, via network communication, to the seller
4 that funds from an account associated with the purchaser are
5 available and that the seller should ship the goods to, or provide
6 the service for, the purchaser; and

7 store an indication in the memory that the notice has been
8 transmitted to the seller.

1 34. The system of claim 33, wherein the notice is transmitted
2 after at least one of (i) a predetermined period, beginning at
3 initiation of a debit to an account associated with the purchaser,
4 has elapsed, or (ii) funds from the purchaser account are credited
5 to an account associated with a processing agent.

1 35. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2 configured to:

3 receive, via network communication, a first notice of (i) the
4 goods having been shipped to the purchaser, or (ii) the services
5 having been performed for the purchaser;

6 store in the memory an indication that the first notice has
7 been received;

8 transmit a second notice, via network communication, to the
9 purchaser that the seller has one of (i) shipped the goods to the
10 purchaser, or (ii) performed the services for the purchaser; and

11 store in the memory an indication that the second notice has
12 been transmitted to the purchaser.

1 36. The system of claim 35, wherein the first notice includes a
2 delivery tracking number.

1 37. The system of claim 35, wherein the first notice is transmitted
2 by at least one of (i) the seller, or (ii) a shipping agent.

1 38. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2 configured to:

3 receive, via network communication from at least one of the
4 purchaser, the seller, and a shipping agent, a notice of one of (i)
5 the goods having been received from the seller and being
6 acceptable, or (ii) the services having been acceptably performed
7 by the seller; and

8 store in the memory an indication that the notice has been

9 received.

1 39. The system of claim 38, wherein:

2 the processor is further configured to initiate a credit to an
3 account associated with the seller and store an indication in the
4 memory of the initiation of the credit to the seller account; and
5 the credit to the seller account is initiated subsequent to
6 receiving the notice.

1 40. The system of claim 28, wherein:

2 the processor is further configured to receive, via network
3 communication, a notice of (i) the goods having been shipped by the
4 seller, or (ii) the services having been performed by the seller,
5 initiate a credit to an account associated with the seller, store
6 an indication in the memory of the initiation of the credit to the
7 seller account;

8 the credit to the seller account is initiated after a
9 predetermined period, beginning at receipt of the notice; and

10 the notice is received from at least one of (i) the seller, or
11 (ii) a shipping agent.

1 41. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2 configured to:

3 receive, via network communication, a notice of one of (i) the
4 goods having been received from the seller and being unacceptable,
5 (ii) the goods having not been received from the seller, (iii) the
6 services having not been acceptably performed by the seller, or
7 (iv) the services having not been performed by the seller; and

8 store in the memory an indication that the notice has been
9 received.

1 42. The system of claim 41, wherein the notice includes a notice
2 to suspend a pending credit to an account associated with the
3 seller.

1 43. The system of claim 41, wherein the notice includes a notice
2 to reverse a debit to an account associated with the purchaser.

1 44. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2 configured to:

3 receive, via network communication from at least one of the
4 purchaser or a shipping agent, a first notice that the goods have
5 been returned shipped to the seller;

6 store in the memory an indication that the first notice has
7 been received;

8 transmit to the seller, via network communication, a second
9 notice that the goods have been returned shipped from the
10 purchaser; and

11 store in the memory an indication that the second notice has
12 been transmitted to the seller.

1 45. The system of claim 44, wherein the first notice includes a
2 delivery tracking number.

1 46. The system of claim 44, wherein the processor is further
2 configured to:

3 receive, via network communication from at least one of the
4 seller or a shipping agent, a third notice that the goods have been
5 received by the seller; and

6 store in the memory an indication that the third notice has
7 been received.

1 47. The system of claim 28, wherein:

2 the processor is further configured to initiate a credit to an
3 account associated with the purchaser and store in the memory an
4 indication of the initiation of the credit to the purchaser
5 account; and

6 the credit to the purchaser account is initiated after at
7 least one of (i) receipt of a notice, via network communication
8 from a least one of the seller or a shipping agent, that the goods
9 have been returned to the seller by the purchaser and accepted by

10 the seller, or (ii) a predetermined period, beginning at a
11 notification to the seller that the purchaser has shipped the goods
12 to the seller, has elapsed.

1 48. The system of claim 28, wherein the goods or services are
2 goods or services purchased from an internet auction.

1 49. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2 configured to:

3 initiate a debit from an account associated with the
4 purchaser;

5 initiate a credit to an escrow account associated with a
6 processing agent;

7 initiate a debit to the escrow account associated with the
8 processing agent;

9 initiate a credit to an account associated with the seller;
10 store an indication in the memory of the initiation of the
11 debit to the purchaser account; and
12 store an indication in the memory of the initiation of the
13 credit to the seller account.

1 50. The system of claim 49, wherein the credit to the escrow
2 account is a corresponding credit to the debit from the purchaser
3 account.

1 51. The system of claim 49, wherein the credit to the seller
2 account is a corresponding credit to the debit from the escrow
3 account.

1 52. The system of claim 28, wherein:

2 the communications port is further configured to receive an
3 instruction, via a web page generated subsequent to the purchaser
4 selecting a hyper-link presented to the purchaser by an Internet
5 web site selling goods or services, to direct execution of an
6 electronic escrow transaction for a sale transaction; and

7 the web page presented to the purchaser includes details of
8 the purchase made from the internet web site.

1 53. The system of claim 28, wherein the stored logged
2 communications include an indication of the date and time of each
3 communication's direction or receipt.

1 54. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2 configured to retrieve any of the stored communications from the
3 memory.

1 55. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
2 configured to (i) receive, from a shipping agent, a first notice
3 that goods have been delivered to the purchaser, (ii) store in the
4 memory an indication that the first notice has been received, (iii)
5 receive, from the purchaser, a second notice that the delivered
6 goods are acceptable, (iv) store in the memory an indication that
7 the second notice has been received, and (v) initiate a credit to
8 an account associated with the seller.

1 56. The system of claim 55, wherein the credit to the seller
2 account is initiated after at least one of (i) a predetermined
3 period, beginning upon receipt of the first notice, has elapsed, or
4 (ii) receipt of the second notice.

1 57. An article of manufacture for integrated event tracking of an
2 electronic escrow transaction, the article of manufacture
3 comprising:

4 a computer readable medium; and
5 computer programming stored on the medium;
6 wherein the stored computer programming is configured to be
7 readable from the computer readable medium by a computer to thereby
8 cause the computer to operate so as to:

9 receive an instruction from a purchaser, via a network, to
10 effect an electronic escrow transaction associated with a sale,
11 made via the network, of goods or services from a seller;

12 direct at least one network communication with each of the
13 purchaser, the seller and at least one financial institution in
14 effecting the electronic escrow transaction; and

15 store a log of each communication associated with the
16 electronic escrow transaction in a memory.

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